

AUSTRALIAN

# TRAVELLER

HONESTLY AUSTRALIAN

## HOLIDAY HERE STILL!

*Why our amazing country is not a consolation prize*

### *A FRESH START*

The regenerative  
power of travel

### MAGICAL MYSTERY TOURS

The backyard  
surprises you will  
want to know about

### PARADISE FOUND (AGAIN)

The triumphant return of Kangaroo Island

# SHORTCUTS

*pillow talk · wine & dine · hot list · rewind · park life · inner beauty · walkabout · what's on*



## AN EVENING IN ITALY

*The order of the day at Il Pontile, Sydney's newest Italian fine diner (with its earthy but elegant and light-filled interiors that spill out to the waterfront), is a cut-glass crisp Prosecco to kick things off before the sun sets over the iconic Finger Wharf. See page 16 for more.*

# WINE & DINE

From a new sandstone bar in *HOBART*, to a new look for an old fave in *NAROOMA*, here's where to get amongst it.



## NOTES FROM NAPLES

The newest jewel in the crown of Woolloomooloo's Finger Wharf – a Sydney icon with wool-boom beginnings as the city's first wharf and now a first-class dining precinct – is a slice of Italy in the shape of fine diner, *Il Pontile*. The waterside restaurant is helmed by fourth-generation Italian restaurateur and chef Mario Percuoco and reflects his native Naples in its location and menu. Lunch or dinner might kick off with fresh oysters and proceed with an antipasti of burrata con *nettarine e nocciole* (burrata with peach and hazelnuts), before moving onto a primi dish of linguine *al cartoccio* (linguine baked in a parcel with mixed seafood), and a secondi of *guazzetto di pesce* (fish fillet of the day sautéed with cherry tomatoes and clams). There will be careful consultation of the wine list throughout, which traverses all regions of Italy (plus Australia and a few French drops), and a sweet affogato finish. With its interior makeover by Bang Architecture, the neutral-toned space is light and refined, yet earthy, textural and inviting, divided by arched doorways and spilling outside to a buzzing *al fresco* area. [ilpontile.com.au](http://ilpontile.com.au)



## Proud Mary

The final element of *The Tasman*, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Hobart, is in place with the opening of *Mary Mary*, the property's compelling cocktail bar and spirits library. Housed in the former strong room of the original Georgian hospital, *St Mary's*, built in 1841, the original sandstone walls are complemented by dark wood panelling and soft lighting, with the statement bar rendered in wood, leather and marble. Here, bar manager Ronán Kavanagh shares his favourite Tassie-influenced recipe from the cocktail menu.

### Tasman Fruit Cup

50 ml Never Never Fancy Fruit Cup  
75 ml Willie Smith's Apple Cider  
A dash of Tasmanian Pepperberry Tincture  
A dash of fresh lemon juice  
*Assemble items in a large wine glass with ice.  
Garnish with slices of local apple, citrus, mint and a fresh cherry.*



## HOT PLATES

### Wharf Bar, Manly Beach

Sydney's Manly institution Wharf Bar is up and running again after extensive renovations, including the addition of Bar Tropic, a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant and cocktail bar overseen by executive chef Francois Poulard (ex-Chiswick). Do order the cold seafood platter, which includes spanner crab salad, scallop ceviche, tiger prawns, kingfish crudo, freshly shucked oysters and flatbread. [wharfbar.com.au](http://wharfbar.com.au)

### Rodd & Gunn

Purveyor of New Zealand style, Rodd & Gunn has expanded its offering from chinos to cappuccinos with the opening of The Lodge Bar at Myer Chadstone, Melbourne. After browsing the menswear, customers can take a seat at the terrazzo bar or relax into a comfortable chair and sample a raft of New Zealand wines, spirits and specialty coffee. Expect classic bar fare from chef Matt Lambert such as grilled cheese and tomato on sourdough. [roddandgunn.com/au/the-lodge-bar](http://roddandgunn.com/au/the-lodge-bar)

### Garçon Bleu

The Adelaide foodie landscape continues to expand with another interesting addition in the form of *Garçon Bleu* on Currie Street. Head chef Gianni Delogu, formerly of Melbourne culinary landmark *Vue de monde*, is in charge of the menu – an innovative reimagining of traditional French fare – while the dining space by P49DESIGN is also considered and stylish, including staff kitted out in bespoke uniforms by Paolo Sebastian. [garconbleu.com.au](http://garconbleu.com.au)

### Shōmen

*Shōmen* (pictured), the latest offering from chef Adam Liston and restaurateur Simon Kardachi, the creative duo behind popular spots *Shōbōsho*, *Shō* and *ShoSho*, has also enlivened Adelaide's food scene. The hole-in-the-wall ramen shop on Leigh Street riffs off the takeaway ramen served to much acclaim next door at *Shōbōsho*. *Shōmen's* menu offers up a quick-dine or takeaway version of its sibling's menu such as noodles and duck rice, and an interesting take on Hainanese chicken rice. [shomen.com.au](http://shomen.com.au)

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDRE CASTELLUCCI (SHŌMEN); ADAM GIBSON (TASMAN FRUIT CUP, MARY MARY)



## A NEW LEAF

In a city that is all about good coffee, the arrival of *Yugen Tea Bar* ([yugenteabar.com.au](http://yugenteabar.com.au)) is challenging Melburnians to consider a different daily brew. The stylish, moody space, installed in the new *Capitol Grand* in South Yarra, presents like a tea apothecary where tea sommelier Thibaut Chuzeville brews some 40 teas from 10 different countries, and pastry chef John Demetrios has assembled a menu of delightful sweet accompaniments that elevate high tea to high art. We asked Thibaut to read the tea leaves and reveal all about *Yugen Tea Bar*.

### WHAT DROVE YOU TO OPEN A TEA BAR IN THE COFFEE CAPITAL OF THE COUNTRY?

*Yugen Tea Bar* is an element of *Yugen Restaurant* set to open early '22. The idea was born between culinary director chef Stephen Nairn, executive pastry chef John Demetrios and myself. My passion is tea, and together we had the idea to create something in the space that united all of our passions, a balance between artisan loose-leaf tea and handcrafted pastry. You can get amazing coffee everywhere in Australia; there is space for great tea.

### THE TAKING OF TEA IN OTHER COUNTRIES IS IMBUED WITH MUCH CEREMONY. IS THE IDEA TO REINVENT IT IN AUSTRALIA AS AN INDULGENCE?

Not as an indulgence, no, but definitely with respect. It's rare to have a bad cup of coffee in Australia, but it's more challenging to find a good cup of tea. *Yugen* is respectful of the tea makers, their dedication to their artistry in growing and making tea. The setting is more contemporary, and our tea-service style is not Japanese or Chinese as we have teas from all over the world, yet it is inspired by traditions from those countries.

### WHAT WILL A VISIT TO YUGEN INVOLVE?

*Yugen Tea Bar* is a retail shop and a tea bar so guests can pop in to pick up some tea or teaware, pastries and chocolates or they can sit and enjoy a serving of tea from our à la carte menu. The menu offers everything from a single serve of tea or a 45-minute tea experience with our sommeliers. We also have afternoon tea, served with tea or Champagne



and [this year] we will open in the evenings and have tea cocktails and a dessert degustation.

### HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON THE TEAS ON THE MENU – MUCH TESTING AND TASTING?

Yes, so much tasting. My fascination with tea has spanned over six or seven years. The lockdowns in Melbourne over the last two years did give me and the team time to contact farmers and growers from all over the world to get samples. We now have 40 different teas from 10 different countries.

### HOW DID YOU CONCEPTUALISE THE SWEETS MENU TO COMPLEMENT THE TEA MENU?

As a Frenchman, I am a bit picky about patisserie, but I can comfortably say I am working with the best pastry chef in Australia. John Demetrios is the executive pastry chef for all the restaurants and event spaces at *Capitol Grand*. He is an incredible talent. His pastries are both delicious and complex, and work seamlessly with all the different styles and flavour profiles of tea.

### WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE BREW?

There are so many variables and styles of tea and what you drink depends on your mood, the season etc. If I had to pick one, it would be oolong. The oolongs from the Wuyi Mountains [in Fujian, China], are some of my favourite.

## Flavour pop

A perennial quick snack, popcorn gets a suitably Melbourne elevation at *Popkin's Artisan Popcorn*, Australia's first (and currently only) gourmet popcorn shop. Located in the suburb of Elwood, *Popkin's* small-batch creations include the Signature line of flavours including *Buttery*, *Country Cheddar* and *Caramel Gold*, and the Luxury range of *Chocolate Gold*, *Cheddar and Chilli* and *Salted Caramel*; at least two of the Luxury range will change month to month to ensure there's always something new on offer. [popkins.com.au](http://popkins.com.au)



## Meat and great

Having elevated butchery to a theatrical art form at its celebrated Sydney space, *Victor Churchill* has opened a flagship Melbourne store in Armadale. Owner Anthony Puharich, who founded the business in 2009 with his father Victor, a fourth-generation butcher, worked with designer Rod Faucheux to create a multisensory design. Upon entering the meat emporium through its heritage facade (it is housed in an old bank building) there is no traditional counter; instead three circular timber butcher's blocks behind curved glass screens create somewhat of a performance space. And, tucked at the back, *The Bar* has seating for 12 guests to enjoy a glass of something with charcuterie and premium cuts grilled to perfection. [victorchurchill.com](http://victorchurchill.com)



## All hands on deck

The summertime delights of the NSW South Coast town of *Narooma* have been bolstered with the reimagining of local fave *Quarterdeck*. Located at *Wagonga Inlet*, the bar is a modern take on the kitsch delights of the tiki lounge, with the interiors having undergone a *Merivale*-version of a light refresh, and food, drink and service typical of the Sydney hospitality behemoth. Head chef Tal Buchnik's menu is big on fresh seaside flavours including *Wagonga rock oysters*, grilled citrus pork belly tacos and a fun QD sundae that will keep parents happy (because it will keep the kids happy). And behind the palm frond-fringed bar, *Victor Costa's* drinks menu has suitably theatrical creations including a banana daiquiri and the *Zombie*, combining *Bacardi*, apricot brandy and pineapple. [merivale.com](http://merivale.com)

